Dearest

I wonder if you'd like this ticket for
the Magic Flute at the Old Vic
tomorrow night I'm threatened with
headache & influenza I mustn't go, damn it.
If you can't use it, would you give it to
anyone else - Quimbo, perhaps.

I think you had better not repeat
what I said about Norton being frightened
of people at Garden Degree — I think
this was one of the things Bob told us
in confidence - but he was so muddled
I can't remember.

J R B.

(1922)

We have just settled with a German firm to reproduce Duncan's designs for Luce. They are very cheap, & if good, we might start doing pictures. How much does your man charge for photographing pictures? Monks House
A block wd cost about 10/- we think.

21

Dec. 22nd 1922

Dearest,

I searched the curiosity shops of Lewes yesterday, & only found this curious phallic emblem (Don't ask your father in law what that means) reminding me slightly of the bowl which figures in some of your still lives. Anyhow, being glass, it is easily broken. It is meant to hold scent: but why not try it as a candlestick? (failing the other use, which, as I say, don't investigate at the breakfast table)

I can hardly imagine Cleeve House, with dolphin captive all day. I suppose the children tide you over, & exhibit you only in those maternal aspects which may well disarm suspicion.

I left you in black despair. Must you really become wandering again. Six months in France - six at Charleston - I shall never see you. But that, as you will remark, is not really the point. Seriously, I think you ought to prevent Maynard before this too late. I can't believe that he realises what the effects would be. I can foresee only too well Lydia stout, charming, exacting; Maynard in the Cabinet; 46 the report of the Duke of premiers ministers. M. being a simple man, not used analytic as we are, would sink beyond recall long before he realised his state. Then he would awake, to find 3 children, & his life entirely & for ever controlled. That is how it appears to me, without considering my own grievances. If you don't put your view before him, he will have a care against you when the catastrophe arrives. Moreover, Lydia is far better as a Bohemian unattached, hungry, & expectant, than as a matron with nothing to hope, & all her rights secure.

There is not much news. Fragments of gossip return to my mind - but I can't help thinking your own pouch is full, & the contents

not shared equitably. Lord Esher has forbidden Brett to live with Gertler – not that they ever lived, save in the sense of sharing the same saucepan. So he lodges 2 doors off. We have been elected to that horrid mauling pauling society which meets on Thursday – Murry, Sydney, Brett, Gertler, & Kotelianasky – The absurd creatures model themselves, I gather, upon the Apostles: first sex are looked at; then voted for. Sydney's wife was blackballed. So this a very great compliment. But what I say is, if you can't be clever, isn't it better to be beautiful?

Did I tell you that Sydney has discovered that we are all responsible for the sins of all? This the new gospel – accounts for the miserable quality of their conversation. But none of this interests Dolphin. I am still rather stupid in the head, or I should be writing Punch & Judy.

I have laid down the law to Lottie, with the usual result – she is perfectly angelic & as humble as a caterpillar. I think I shall keep her like this, & be a real lady in future. However Nelly tells me she was even worse with Jo-án. Once they had such a scene that Jo-án went to Roger & said rather the most base of Lottie, upon which Roger chose Lottie, according to Nellie. But I don't think you quite appreciate the difficulties of being a Socialist. Did you know that I'm a socialist?

Ralph became so sad & so charming & pathetic that I almost relented. But when I think of his remark about Lytton I stiffen my bristles. It all very distressing, as I feel slightly responsible for that marriage, & so feel that one is hauling up a life boat – leaving Carrington to flounder in the middle of the channel embraced by a cuttle fish. And if this is true that we are all responsible for the sins of all, surely we ought to link together? What is your opinion? I am constantly inspired by moral doctrines rolled out, most unexpectedly, from your deep sea.

If Julian has got the book I sent, let me have it; as I rather want it. Give him my love, & tell him I insist upon having a letter of thanks, giving me a full account of his views upon English literature. I want to see him.

Now write me a letter of love.

V B.

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HAMILL 2/10/66

1921 ?

Dearest,

Hear from Duncan that you're expecting Mary tomorrow – in which case I think it would really be better if I didn't come but came on Monday to Innes instead. Would that suit you? If anything it suits me rather better. I'll come then unless I hear.

I knew I had either talk or chatter & then M. would talk – besides I've got several matters to discuss with you in private (which I don't mean anything exciting – only business –

Yr B.

1922

22

3rd Jan.

This is the best I can find.
They say the needles are as
good as can be had; —
more money would only be
spent in case. This cost 3/
so I owe you 2/

No time for more
I'll write tomorrow.

—

Hogarth House,

Monday Feb. 20th 1922.

Dearest Dolphin,

Really you are getting too eccentric – to conduct your correspondence by addressing the envelope only & putting Clive's letters to you inside. I liked Clive's letter very much, but I should have liked yours better. And then Clive said nothing against me. Altogether he was perfectly discreet & amiable, save for one sneer at Vita, which annoyed me very much, but which I've sworn not to reveal. There! That'll make your fins water. Come back & I'll explain all.

But instinct tells me that you want to hear of nothing so much as the state of my health. Did you get your cheque? Did you hear of my heart disease? My heart is better: I'm still in bed though; & for one, speechless, legend words indignant with this miserable pulsing Eustace which has now lasted over 6 weeks, & doesn't really pay. I've been having visitors this last week; but you know what hands they are. They come in & sit down & produce a bunch of violets, & then say how nice it is to be in bed, & how well I look – which you know always makes me furious. It's something like seeing the rabbits cross the heather in a shooting gallery. Still, I have to amuse you – that's my mission in life – & so I must take the ashes of memory.

I have not seen Roger.

Roger rings up & asks himself to dinner. When told that I can't see people at night he heaves a sigh & replies that, alas, every hour of daylight is sacred to art. So he sacrifices my society, which may not be long for this world, to some livid fraud. His blood be on his own head. I have seen Adrian - perfectly Charming, detached from Karin; & really a success in his own way: I've seen Lytton: very depressed because that dunderhead Ralph has been trying sharp practices with his publishers & naturally, failed: Mollie Hamilton; oh & so on - too dull to write out. I had great fun with Elena the other day however. I think she is quite the nicest human being I have ever met - solid - splendid - adult - with the body of a matron & the mind of a child & the tastes of a schoolboy: so maternal to me that I fell in love with her at once - Perhaps I always have been in love with her. With this gigantic mass of purity sat down by my side & I told her the story of George. Not only fair to say that she began it. Do you realise that the still demi with Elsie & Mrs Popham in Bruton Street, & sees Lady Sligo & the ladies Browne, & lunches with George & Margaret? "I am going to be perfectly frank about your brother - your half brother - & say that I have never liked him. Nor has Bruce. I never did like him even in the old days." This being so, I couldn't resist applauding her, & remarking that of the had known all the world Lave hated him. The queer thing with Elena is that one never knows what penetrates, what slips off. She was shocked at first; but very soon reflected that much more goes on than one realises. I rather think she was alluding to her father & Miss Lütting. Now she'll tell Bruce, who being a perfect gentleman will probably have to spit in George's face in the Club. Don't you

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think there is a noble work for our old age – to let the light in upon the Duckworths – & I daresay George will be driven to shoot himself one day when he's shooting rabbits. Until Elena married at the age of 35 she was never allowed to read a book that Mrs Ralph Thorne had first read first; & the improper pages were folded over, so that her knowledge of literature is naturally imperfect. She never unfolded the pages: they still remain folded. I think its the right way to bring up girls. Please do it with Angelica. There is nothing like the charm of perfectly ignorant innocent woman of 40. But then I am in love.

Molly came & talked, as you said, about Michael; who is, they say, very unhappy. I sent Julian a present, but got no answer – little devil. However, I told him he needn't write, & I wish next time you write, you would enclose Julian: not your dentists bill. I draw the line at menus, washing accounts, & household books. Maxon is dead. Maxon is – or rather was – Jason's father; & he died after long agony, leaving Jason in control of two households of lively lunatics, one of whom broke its leg; another had violent influenza, & Mrs Maxon was prostrated; so that Jason, what with the funeral, & endolences from public bodies, was never so happy in his life. Adrian met him, come up to buy a suit of blacks. He is probably going to set up house with his mother. & I am more than ever overcome by the supreme justice of fate – who else could have composed the life of Jason so with such mastery? Molly seemed to me rather spry; but the hair grows very fat; & has curious lapses, when the looks like a real at the Zoo. I hear from Koteliansky that Gentler does not tell very well – & from Violet Dickinson that the Sitwells have been reciting what seemed to her sheer nonsense through megaphones – do

Clive & I overlap. I'm afraid the parroket is back at his old tricks with the beau monde: I'm seeing him tomorrow; shall I ask Mary Hutch- to come & see me? But then I can never hide my so successfully; & one ought to wear a lace cap in bed. Ferguson is coming in a minute, & I'm going to make him let me out. Then I shall get back to my writing; but I'm not a good writer. Violet said "And how is old Nessa looking? ... How is Adrian looking? ... Of course, I think you were quite right about Duncan Grant- he is a great painter... How's old Sophie? I shall never forget Fritham — & your father taking my cup of coffee. I loved your father." & so on. what are you stops, or listening for a second.

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I'm now getting dull, & as you don't like

Talking, I must stop.

We think of going to Sicily on March 20th —

but God knows.

Does Duncan ever say that he loves me?

V.W.

Yes. I was rather depressed when you saw me- what it comes to is this.. you say "I do think you had a dull respectable absurd life- lots of money, no children, everything so settled .. & Conventional. Look at me now - only 8 pence a year - lovers - Paris - life - love - art - excitement - God! I must be off" Then tears me in tears.

HAMILL 6/1/66